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EDITORIALS

Who Made Mistakes?

The Kennedy brothers, Attorney General Robert and President John, seem to be a little confused on who ordered what in connection with the abortive 1961 invasion of Cuba.

Some time ago, when Robert was quoted as saying, "My brother made a mistake," it appeared he meant the president had made a mistake in cancelling the aircraft umbrella which he had promised would help the invaders. More recently, in an article entitled, "Attorney General Robert Kennedy speaks his mind," it appears he meant his brother made a mistake in supporting the invasion in the first place, or that he did not support it. Or, is it possible that he meant his brother made two mistakes—one when he gave the go-ahead signal for the invasion and again when he cancelled the promised air protection?

Now we are constrained to wonder how many mistakes Robert thinks his brother made in connection with the invasion of Cuba and whether he also thinks his brother has made a good many other mistakes. There is even the possibility that Robert, who has been sitting side by side with John Kennedy at the president's desk and has been labeled No. 2 president, may think his own intelligence and shrewdness exceed that of "my brother, the president."

After the Memphis Commercial Appeal had stated that President Kennedy "ordered" the invasion of Cuba one of the readers objected. Editorially the Commercial Appeal had this to say on that subject:

"A reader challenges the Commercial Appeal's use of the word 'ordered' in connection with President Kennedy's role in determining

whether Cuban exiles should have tried to invade Castro Cuba in April, 1961.

"Perhaps it is not the precise word. Nevertheless, Mr. Kennedy did more than permit the exiles to mount the attack. Planning for the operation was done by agencies of the United States government, including the Central Intelligence Agency. Unless the president had given his go-ahead signal there could have been no attack. It was a simple question of yes or no.

"The president says he approved the attack on the advice of others

in the executive branch but that he accepts full responsibility. Thus it is merely academic as to whether he merely agreed to bad advice or 'ordered' the ill-fated invasion."

Robert Kennedy stirred new doubts as to the accuracy of his own statements when he said air coverage or assistance was never planned nor promised.

For almost two years since that attack, numerous authorities had stated that the air coverage was promised. So far as all writers and officials have disclosed, such a promise had never been denied by the president. If he did not promise this assistance, he was doing the people of the United States and Cuba an injustice by not clearing up the matter. During all that time he was extremely anxious to put through a ransom program to obtain the release of those captured in the invasion. This finally was done, though government assistance, including a reported promise to allow income tax deductions on money thus contributed. There were even hints that many of those

Among those who said President Kennedy promised air support for the invasion was Dagoberto Darias, who commanded a transport vessel in the exile attack. He said air cover was promised and charged that President Kennedy betrayed the Cuban patriots, although "his brother is attempting to justify him on the Bay of Pigs fiasco."

Another of the leaders in the Cuban invasion, said an American army colonel assured him there would be "full air control."

Darias said C.I.A. members had said there would be air cover. He added that on the morning the attack was mounted 22 jets bearing the invaders' insignia flew over the boats carrying exile troops. "This proves they were prepared to give us air power," Darias said.

These things and Robert Kennedy's recent statement leave us wondering how many mistakes Robert thinks his brother has made and whether he concurs in a Washington official's statement that the government has a right to